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Tetsu Kohno

Japanese Homogeneity—Its Genesis and Manifestations

Perceptions vary with cultures. When Westerners say, "The squeaky hinge gets the grease,"⁽¹⁾ the message is that loud and constant complaints will be taken care of sooner or later. I presume that quite a few Japanese will immediately connect it with one of their own maxims: "A nail that sticks up is hammered down," meaning those who push themselves forward can expect to take a beating.

In Japan, loud and constant complaints are not worthy of decent persons, and therefore the possibility is dim for most people to enjoy the humor of the squeaky hinge. Argumentative or assertive persons are more likely than not kept at a distance. The wartime education emphasized the evil of individualism. We used to be taught that individualism is nothing but egoism, and that this is why Western soldiers, seldom ready to sacrifice themselves for the country, could never beat ours. As an extension of this idea, any minority opinion tended, and I am afraid still tends, to be taken as an unhappy accident readily conducive to frictions or conflicts, and therefore to be duly suppressed. First of all we need to think about the genesis of this age-old national behavioral pattern of doing together what all others do under one authority, and in willful disregard of dissident minorities.

Historically it has been in the nature of the Japanese to be

quickly influenced by new ideas from outside, and this was the case when they had to accept the U.S.-inspired New Constitution which specified that sovereignty no longer rested with the Emperor, but with the people themselves. Conceptual understanding of Western democracy is one thing, and its practical application quite another. The Japanese equivalent of the English word “public” is “oyake,” etymologically “big house.” The Japanese public philosophy is that of a big house or family, with “wa” (harmony) as its key concept. “Honor harmony (‘wa’) and make it a principle to let there be no opposition” was the first of the Seventeen Articles of the Constitution proclaimed by Prince Shotoku already in 604 AD or CE. Since then this norm of harmonious unity has remained unchanged as a main ideal of Japanese politics. The phenomenon of a puppet ruler being manipulated by a puppeteer strongman used to be common, but successive shogunates as wielder of power never failed to treat the Imperial family with due respect as a necessary symbol of national unity. This situation still persists.

With the inter-ethnic crossbreeding almost completed inside Japan proper around 1000 CE, the Japanese as a whole had already been homogenized as an ethnic entity by then. And as is well known, a very long period of isolation from the outside world up to the late nineteenth century facilitated the process of homogenization in terms of behavioral patterns and social relations as well as of physiognomy. Though meticulously subdivided in hierarchical order, mutual bonds by birth and blood were there to unite the nation over the long haul.

As there was no way out for dissidents in a feudal society tightly knit inside and seagirt outside, people had to accustom themselves to forming consensus with collective harmony in view. This already prevalent tendency was all the more strengthened during the premodern civil war era when the victorious made it a rule to mercilessly massacre the entire family of the defeated opponent. Be united or perish. Little room was left for anti-leadership factions

to be heard. Consensus was also sought to cope with annual threats of flood as well as frequent earthquakes and typhoons. With no detailed long-range plans worked out for them, people were driven to think only of the present for an immediate result. In such desperate situations any minority opinions would seem to be thorns in the flesh, and moral intolerance came to be bred in the bone. There developed an evil cycle of consensus pressure debilitating moral courage and debilitated moral courage necessitating routine consensus. This must also have had something to do with the rigidly exclusionist and myopically ethnocentric orientation which still reveals itself from time to time in Japanese collective behavior both at home and abroad.

In connection with consensus-seeking behavior it is often pointed out that Japanese have no monotheistic religion in which God talks directly to the individual conscience, and that the individual consciousness has somehow faded away into a collective one. Any liability is not dreadful if shared by all whom it may concern. This causes slovenly interpersonal dependence, and a certain Japanese psychoanalyst says that morally speaking, Japanese may have directly entered the genital phase from the oral phase, bypassing the anal phase, that is, omitting required toilet training for mental independence. (2)

To do without such mental independence Japanese are required to act on tacit understanding or agreement. A good proof of this is their abhorrence of litigation, which obliges them to fall back on private out-of-court settlement. It could easily be imagined that a place in such an extremely *Gemeinschaft*-oriented society is closed to those who were not born as insiders. Access to such society is not through voluntary association as in the United States. Here persists an ethic of exclusion which is to any eye incongruent with democracy.

French Japanologist Paul Bonnet called democracy in Japan "Wamocracy," rule of harmony or "harmocracy." Harmocracy

verging on patriarchy. For example, assemblers at Toyota have more sense of solidarity with Toyota management than with their counterparts at Nissan. With more sense of solidarity on an intra-company basis in this manner than on an inter-company basis, no Marxism could ever take root in Japan. And fierce competition between Toyota and Nissan is like a feud between brothers. Both would stop feuding the moment their big mighty daddy reprimands them for breaking the unity of Japanese industry. You already know who this big mighty daddy is—MITI, Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

Not only MITI but the Ministry of Education acts like an obstinate father when censoring history textbooks for high schools. Implored to compromise with the Ministry, the authors come, ultimately, to soften the descriptions or tone down the criticism of the wartime atrocities and colonialistic excesses. And there are also some establishment-side publishers who of their own accord expurgate those passages stigmatizing Japan as a pariah-creating nation. While reading the Japanese version of a magnum opus of Professor Edwin Reischauer, *The Japanese*,⁽³⁾ I was stunned to discover some unpardonable omissions. On page 161 of the original English edition Reischauer wrote, “The *burakumin* and the Koreans offer some problems,” and this sentence disappeared in the Japanese version. And on page 36 as many as twenty-two lines explaining the *burakumin* were entirely expurgated. I would like to resurrect this part:

One extraordinary exception to Japanese homogeneity, however, deserves mention. This is the survival from feudal times of a sort of outcast group, known in the past by various names, including the term *eta*, but now usually called *burakumin*, or “hamlet people,” a contraction from “people of special hamlets.” This group, which may number about 2 percent of the population, probably originated from various sources, such as the vanquished in wars or those whose

work was considered particularly demeaning. Clearly they included people engaged in leather work or butchery, since the Buddhist prejudice against the taking of all animal life made others look down on such persons, though, it should be noted, not on the butchers of human life in a feudal society dominated by a military elite.

The *burakumin* have enjoyed full legal equality for more than a century, but social prejudice against them is still extreme. While they are in no way distinguishable physically from the rest of the Japanese and are not culturally distinct except for their generally underprivileged status, most Japanese are loath to have contact with them and are careful to check family records to insure that they avoid intermarriage. In the highly urbanized Japan of today, the *burakumin* are becoming progressively less recognizable, but their survival as an identifiable group is a surprising contrast to the otherwise almost complete homogeneity of the Japanese people.

The publisher of the Japanese version is the anti-dovish Bungei Shunju, but the translator, Anthropologist-cum-Newscaster Masao Kunihiro, is on the liberal side, and showed quite an unexpected interpretation when he translated the following passage on page 406 of the original:

Most Koreans and Chinese in Japan are permanent residents, many of them having been born there and speaking no other language but Japanese. Visually and often in their living habits they cannot be distinguished from Japanese. But the Japanese do their best to keep them separate, making it difficult for them to acquire Japanese citizenship and commonly discriminating against them. Intermarriage is rare and is looked down upon. Few successfully pass, not the color line, but the national consciousness line.

I think Reischauer meant, "Few Koreans or Chinese successfully

pass the national consciousness line,” but Kunihiro took it as “Few Japanese successfully pass the national consciousness line,”⁽⁴⁾ thereby suggesting that at least there might be those Japanese, though not many, who have tried to pass the national consciousness line, but alas few manage to do so. I liked this interpretation, though obviously mistaken.

I don't know which is touchier, the problem of *burakumin* or that of the Korean residents. It should not be overlooked, however, that while, as mentioned above, twenty-two lines on the *burakumin* had to be omitted in the Japanese version of Reischauer's book, no omission was made of details about the Korean residents. If Koreans detected any omission, there might occur another international dispute, but the *burakumin* are their own countrymen, and details of the age-old and still prevalent discriminatory conventions against them bring disgrace upon Japan as a civilized nation. Moreover, there is a fear that the introduction by a renowned scholar of Reischauer's caliber of the *buraku* problem to the worldwide reading public would encourage the *burakumin* themselves to struggle for more equality and justice. Or the publisher may have wanted to avoid further inciting in any manner some already oversensitive *buraku* activists. All in all, the Korean residents seem to be ranked above the *burakumin* psychologically, but legally below them.

It is not a light task to try to elucidate the homogeneity of the Japanese society in connection with their attitude toward foreigners. There is no end of paradoxes popping up. Japanese have been quite active in accepting outside cultural influences, but on the other hand theirs is a closed society obstinately cold to outsiders. “Legendary Japanese hospitality toward visitors suddenly disappears when you stop being an ‘honored guest’ and slide into the ‘resident alien’ category,” said an American journalist briefly stationed in Japan.⁽⁵⁾ While they adore foreign culture, they abhor foreigners. They are crazy about Korean ceramics and porcelains, but this does not lead to their respect of the Korean people. In the 1987 sense-

of-closeness poll conducted by the Japanese Prime Minister's Office, 39.7% of 3,000 respondents reported feeling close to South Korea, but 51.8% had no such feeling. In 1986 45.2% had replied in the negative, thus manifesting a decline of 6.6%. ⁽⁶⁾

The Plight of the Korean Residents as a Typical Minority Group in Japan

Now I would like to move to the main theme of being alien or semi-alien among such a homogeneous people. Just to make my viewpoint clearer, let me briefly introduce my background which is not quite right by Japanese standard. I am a Japanese national all right, but was born of Korean father and Japanese mother. According to the 1935 Nuremberg Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor there were three basic designations for Jews: (1) a full Jew, anyone with three racially full Jewish grandparents, (2) a *mischling* first degree with two Jewish grandparents, and (3) a *mischling* second degree with one Jewish grandparent. ⁽⁷⁾ Therefore I was born a *mischling* first degree, no less. This marginal-man background is the very frame of reference with which I have been sizing up any people in any situation. What I can do here is naturally to offer you a case study of the Korean community which is more familiar to me than any other minority group in Japan.

First-generation Korean residents were mostly brought to Japan for forced labor during the Pacific War. Second-, third- and fourth-generation Korean residents speak Japanese without accent, and are physiognomically more and more indistinguishable from native Japanese, partly because of rapidly increasing rate of intermarriage which has now exceeded 60%. However indistinguishable in looks, however well-behaved, however intelligent, they must register as aliens and submit to fingerprinting for police purposes.

As is often said, before you can be a person, you have first to

be a citizen. Fully exercising their civil rights as U. S. citizens, Jewish Americans have come through what Eli Ginzberg called the stages of "getting established," "moving up," and "making it." (8) 700,000 Koreans, including 100,000 who have been naturalized, are not fully recognized Japanese citizens, because in Japan people are required to be not just citizens but members of the Japanese nation, "nation" in this case being almost equivalent to "race." And Koreans, however well adjusted, could never meet this final requirement. Simpson and Yinger listed six possible policies which a majority group could apply on a minority group: (a) assimilation, (b) cultural pluralism, (c) legal protection, (d) deportation, (e) subjugation, and (f) elimination. (9) If not accompanied by freedom from discrimination, assimilation has always been combined with subjugation, which means that even naturalized citizens should remain second-class citizens, and for them Eli Ginzberg's stages of "moving up" and "making it" will remain hard to get into, still more so for unnaturalized Koreans either of purely Korean or Korean-Japanese parentage.

The Korean community in Japan is in a fluid situation. First-generation Koreans, now accounting for only 20%, have found it hard to fit themselves into their surroundings due to their congenital Korean life-style as well as invidious discriminations. Born in Japan and in many cases from mothers of Japanese origin, second- and third-generation Koreans have been educated in the same manner as their Japanese peer group, therefore more and more of them cannot be contented with their lot as outsiders. Especially younger ones from third-generation and beyond are likely to japanize themselves because they are seldom nostalgic about their Korean "fatherland." Still, if tied to the Korean community even vestigially, none of them will be free from identity crisis.

There have been and fundamentally still are two alternatives. The first is to confirm one's Korean identity by affiliating with some political or cultural organization either of pro-Republic of

Korea (South) or of pro-Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North) orientation, which may entail rejecting Japanese names and sending one's children to Korean day schools where girls may be ordered to wear Korean costumes, the visibility of which is about the same as Hasidic caftans in American cities other than New York. This is the path treadable only by pure Koreans who have a deep reservoir of national identity and pride. If a *mischling* should follow this line, he or she would have to prove more Korean than pure Koreans, just as a Jewish friend of mine whose mother is a *Polke* (Polish Gentile woman) had to prove his Yiddishkeit by giving up his Ph. D. candidacy at Columbia University to become an authentic hasid.

The second alternative is to assimilate, that is, to discard one's Korean identity and become naturalized as a Japanese citizen, though only after overcoming the cumbersome processes of the law. Even in America it is not considered honorable to conceal one's ethnic identity and assimilate with the mainstream society with a properly assumed Waspish name—dishonorable because it is nothing less than deserting under the fire of prejudices and discriminations. Likewise, so long as there remain mutual hatred and contempt between the Japanese and the Koreans, it will always be dishonorable for Korean residents to japanize themselves for whatever reason, and the reason is obvious enough. Everybody seeks to be free from discrimination and see to it that one's children will have a less stressful or embattled life.

For pure Koreans, half Koreans or for naturalized former Koreans, intermarriage and employment are where they come to realize their identity in the Japanese society, as Diaspora Jews used to and still do according to circumstances. I quote from a newspaper article by a famous Korean novelist living in Japan: "While waiting for her turn at a dentist's, my sister age 50 was addressed by a woman sitting beside by her. The lady was lamenting her daughter's marriage with an American sailor, and never knowing

her addressee was Korean, added that she was glad that her son-in-law was neither black nor Korean.”⁽¹⁰⁾

The Koreans in Korea proper are also well aware of such Japanese prejudice, and never fail to express their feeling of injury. According to the Korean Gallup poll conducted in March 1987, the five most popular countries for South Koreans are the United States, Switzerland, Australia, France and Japan in order of preference.⁽¹¹⁾ (In the 1983 Gallup the order was the United States, Switzerland, Israel, Britain and France. I have yet to find out why Israel's third place has been replaced by Australia this time.) North Korea was the most detested country for 54.9% of the respondents, and Japan for 22.3%. Compared with 14.7% in 1983, it is a remarkable fall in preference for Japan. The older respondents are not so anti-Japanese as the younger and more educated ones. (Of the latter, 40.2% labelled Japan as the most detestable country, while only 21.7% did so regarding North Korea. The high percentage of such strongly anti-Japanese attitude among young Korean intellectuals bears a close parallel to the case of Black antisemitism in the United States.) South Korean hatred of North Korea is like that of the Confederacy toward the Union during the Civil War, therefore Japan is the most detested foreign country. Countries and peoples are never identical, but the Koreans' hatred of Japan is all the more implacable because they are hated and despised by the Japanese even before they come to hate Japan.

I know that one out of three American Jews now intermarry; among the Korean residents in Japan it is two out of three. Cases of intermarriage between Korean males and Japanese females are far more common than those between Japanese males and Korean females. According to a Korean poet in Japan, intermarriage carries a strange primordial association of raping and being raped.⁽¹²⁾ Thus fear of intermarriage could be deemed as an innermost discriminatory motive. From what I have told you about the mutual hatred and contempt, it could easily be imagined that

a case of Korean-Japanese intermarriage is anything but a matter for unreserved congratulation to the families concerned. Passionate love would enable the intermarrying couple to withstand trials, such as fierce resistance from parents on both sides, but in all likelihood the couple would not think so far into the future as to be concerned about their offsprings to be born as "Kojaps." In the extremely unfavorable social atmosphere where intermarriage with a Korean is as deplorable as that with a black, it is natural that grown-up "Kojaps" should often disappear into the general population once they are accepted as its members, though they could never entirely avoid being labeled "half-breed" if so identified.

Such marginal-man consciousness of Kojaps has come to be shared also by third- and fourth-generation Korean residents in general. Immersed in predominantly Japanese mode of life, fewer and fewer of them will be able to connect their future with that of their "fatherland." With scant knowledge of Korean language and culture, their visit to Korea proper will verge on a trip abroad. Now the alternation of generations among them is being considered in qualitative rather than quantitative terms. The gradual de-Koreanization of Korean residents has been effected by the trend of the Japanese society toward internationalization which set in roughly when Japan had to accept Indochinese "boat people" under international pressure.

The Japanese Diet ratified the international Covenants on Human Rights in 1979, and the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1982. Thanks to this Convention the Korean residents obtained the right of permanent residence and also the same security privileges as Japanese citizens enjoy. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, effective in 1985, had quite unexpectedly far-reaching effects, such as the revision of the nationality law and the family registration law above all else. With equality established between patrilineal and matrilineal descents, children born of Korean father and

Japanese mother are now entitled to Japanese nationality, and like any other naturalized aliens, naturalized Koreans can choose whichever family name they prefer, either Korean or Japanese, though the Japanese authorities urge them to conform to Japanese style.

Since the early 1970's Korean residents have struggled for equality in employment both in public and private sectors. Many complications notwithstanding, a handful of Korean residents have been employed on minor local public services, such as mail delivery or sanitation, and also as regular teachers at elementary and secondary public schools, though the Japanese Ministry of Education has warned each prefectural educational committee not to follow such precedents. The message is that Japanese children should be taught by authentic Japanese. I wonder why Korean teachers should not teach things Japanese to Japanese pupils when West Indians or Arabs are actually teaching English at public schools in North America. Koreans are not permitted to apply for any regular position in the government except State university faculties, though this exceptional opportunity has not yet been offered to any scholar of Korean nationality. Big corporations as well as major media are not yet inclined to employ college graduates of wholly or partially Korean parentage. All in all, the Japanese society still remains restrictive and repressive to the Korean minority.

Even children of naturalized former Koreans, who have not yet experienced discrimination, will understand that assimilation is no guarantee for acceptance as full members of the society. There is always a danger of abortive assimilation leading to self-hatred. That is why ties with the "fatherland" are still emphasized, and why Korean residents are urged to regard their residence in Japan merely as a means for contributing to a unified Korea. This could be a Korean version of Zionism.

On the other hand, when Korean residents visit Korea proper, they get stunned by the unexpected incongruity with the mental

climate there and suspect whether they have already become aliens in their home country. Their shock is all the more intensified because of the severely critical stance taken against them by those chauvinistic Koreans in both territories who find it hard to consider any non-Korean-speaking Koreans as their compatriots. They now find out that their "fatherland" is as homogeneous a country as Japan. At first, assimilation with the Japanese society seemed to be in diametrical opposition to identification with the "fatherland," but on second thought both are fundamentally not different because in either case would-be residents are obliged to conform to the majority. It might be possible to draw a parallel between this and the psychology of Jewish American "olim" (immigrants) in Israel.

More and more Korean residents are now determined to become established in Japan, and a proof of this determination could be found in their wish to purchase graveyard plots, although they often are turned down by exclusive public cemeteries, and thus Korean graves tend to crowd together in more lenient ones. As permanent residents in Japan, they would no longer choose to indefinitely remain outsiders, and therefore are ready to share the same rights and obligations as Japanese nationals in order to become insiders, however peripheral. Their perpetually marginal situation being what it is, they could never favor the Japanese fictional polity of one people in one nation. They will remain predisposed to relativize the concept of nationality as do Diaspora Jews. Under never-ending pressures of homology which tend to categorize differences into ugliness and ignorance, they long for an American-style ethnic symbiosis in which they could autonomously retain their Koreanness, thereby serving as a barometer of tolerance for minority groups and also of the extent of internationalization in the Japanese society. There is a sign that incisive social critics of Thomas Sowell's or Orlando Patterson's caliber will appear among young intellectual Korean residents.

Recent Antisemitic Wave—Another Xenophobic Manifestation ?

On the part of the Japanese society, too, people are well aware that the general trend of internationalization has been undermining the myth of a purely homogeneous people and of an absolutely unique culture. Now tens of thousands of Japanese businessmen are stationed all over the world, and when their children, about 3,000 annually, return to prepare for high school or college entrance exams, their peer group in Japan classifies them into three categories, i.e. non-Japanese, abnormal Japanese, and passable Japanese. Whatever their degree of Japaneseness, they have experienced various modes of life, and know that things Japanese have much more in common with things not Japanese than presumed in their home country. A growing number of foreign Japanologists have also proved that most of things claimed to be uniquely Japanese, such as language, social systems, esthetic sense or even brain, have their equivalents or counterparts in other cultures.

Until the 1960's the Japanese had generally been harsh critics of the ultranationalist course taken under the wartime fascist regime. From then on, inspired by triumphs in industry and international trade to become inflated with confidence in their national power, they have grown anxious to find out what makes them so excellent. They like ascribing the national prosperity to their age-old tradition of self-sacrifice and teamwork which derives from the very homogeneity of the nation, and could not possibly be built up by any crossbred country. As is widely known, ex-Premier Yasuhiro Nakasone himself endorsed this point not long ago.

Such ethnocentric pride can easily lead to xenophobic paranoia if Japan considers itself to be threatened by foreign offensives, military or economic. In the 1920's all undesirable foreign influences from Bolshevism to democratic upsurges were believed to have been engineered by the leaders of the Jewish Conspiracy, and

during the 1930's and the first half of the 1940's all foreign interventions against Japanese military expansion were also immediately linked with the same "conspirators." Whenever there is a crisis arising from overwhelming external pressures, the Japanese seem to react in similar fashion. (Perhaps a parallel could be drawn to the Yellow Peril theory which still persists in some Western countries.) The present trade imbalance between Japan and America, the unprecedented surge in the value of the yen against the dollar, and the difficulties faced by the export-oriented Japanese industries, have contributed to a general malaise which leads people to seize with both hands any remotely plausible explanation about the genesis of the problem. Historical amnesia has allowed the old familiar Jewish Conspiracy theory to be resurrected without due reflection on whether Japan's own industrial and international trading policies have been sufficiently equitable.

More than one million copies of two paperbacks published in 1986 and entitled respectively *If You Know the Jews, You will Understand the World* and *If You Know the Jews, You will Understand Japan* have been sold. ⁽¹³⁾ The author, Mr Masami Uno, claims that the trade disputes between Japan and the United States, and the consequent "high yen" crisis could be traced back to the Jewish Conspiracy. According to him, Japan's economic slowdown and industrial "caving-in" have been schemed by the Jews who surreptitiously control almost all major American corporations. But he is unable to offer any specific detailed or documented exposition on individual cases to show that Jewish influence was in fact responsible for anti-Japanese economic activities—let alone to prove that there is a Jewish Conspiracy striving for world dominion. As with those antisemitic libels which prevailed in the 1920's and 1930's, Uno's arguments are based on inaccurate or false data (he states, for example, that Rockefeller, Morgan, du Pont, Mellon, Roosevelt, Schultz etc. are Jewish names) and hazy conjectures about an economic offensive being launched by inter-

national Jewish capital to take over one vulnerable Japanese enterprise after another.

It is easy to dismiss such fabrications as being unworthy of serious consideration as antisemitic. But Uno's publications and those of other Japanese authors who exhibit similar anti-Jewish attitudes ⁽¹⁴⁾ are enjoying a tremendous popularity; and that fact is worthy of comment. One possible interpretation of the present "antisemitic wave" is that many Japanese think it safer and easier to express national discontent and hatred against the Jews in general and against American Jewry in particular rather than against the United States: the Jewish Conspiracy can conveniently be blamed for the escalating economic conflict between the two countries. It is certainly not the first time in history that Jews have been made the scapegoats; and within America's borders there is the parallel phenomenon of Black antisemitism which shuns direct confrontation with the white mainstream.

Uno's prophecies about "another global depression being engineered by international Jewish capital" or "Japan's downfall through the reversion to the gold standard" can easily precipitate alarm and bitter resentment among all strata. Moreover, some recent events (not yet exploited by Uno in his publications) may have confirmed the general suspicion of the Japanese people that the leaders of "international Jewish power" were capable of anything: there was the American Jew who admitted that he had engaged in very profitable but illegal stock exchange deals (and who made handsome donations to Jewish charities); another American Jew who was convicted of spying for Israel; Israel's role in the secret supply of arms to Iran; and the assertion by a disaffected Israeli technician who had worked in a top security plant that Israel did possess nuclear bombs.

The Jewish Conspiracy theory is a futile effort to gloss over Japan's vulnerability to foreign pressure, which is the very reverse side of its swaggering nationalism. Though the odds are that the

demagogic campaigns by Uno and his ilk will go down before long, the Japanese public has again been obliged to reconsider the historical, geographical and psychological limit to proceeding with their own internationalization. If Japanese had lived among and got acquainted with a variety of immigrants and refugees as in the United States, they might have proved more immune from such xenophobia as has been manifested not only to the ballooned false image of the Jews but even to the tiny Korean minority. Indeed, the Japanese treatment of the Korean minority would serve as a litmus test of progress in internationalization.

Speaking of desirable contact with immigrants, I recall the Yiddish class at Columbia University where we sang I. L. Peretz's juvenile poem which runs, "All men are brothers, brown, yellow, black, white; nations, countries and climates—it's an invented story." (15) When American students sing "brown, yellow, black, white," they can visualize those whom they have met in the flesh, while few Japanese could do the same. They seldom experience ethnic mixture and the resulting cultural collisions. Their understanding of foreign cultures is not "built-in" as is the case with Americans or peoples in other pluralistic countries. That is why they are accustomed to viewing the rest of the world merely as a market.

The Peretz poem I have just quoted must be a laughingstock now even among some Jews. It is true that human existence largely depends on territorial imperative and other forms of we-they antagonism, but it is also true that in opposition to genetically codified aggressive instincts, humans never stop manipulating such sublime symbols as were invented by the Hebrew prophets. And who knows whether that poem of Peretz's will not be revalued in this age of intermarriage boom. "Mix up the colors together (Mishet di farbn oys tsuzamen)," he says.

Though Japanese homogeneity looks almost genetically codified, Japanese standard of self-examination is rather high, and the volume of critical statements on their own insularity is just stun-

ning. Certainly to any eye, there is a tug of war going on between those who would insist on the homogeneity of the Japanese nation and those who would reconsider it. We could not give up the hope that more and more aliens and semi-aliens will be accepted by the Japanese as equal human beings.

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Notes

- (1) I came across this English proverb while reading the Japanese version of Jared Taylor: *Shadows of the Rising Sun*. See the opening paragraphs of Chapter 4 with the title of "Conformity."
- (2) Shu Kishida in his interview with Kenneth D. Butler. See *Kurofune Genso (The Black Ship Trauma)*, Treville Press, Tokyo, 1986, p. 133.
- (3) Edwin Reischauer: *The Japanese*, Harvard University Press, 1977.
- (4) See the Japanese version of *ibid.*, Bungei Shunju, Tokyo, 1979, p.406.
- (5) James Fallows, "The Japanese Are Different from You and Me," *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 1986, p.36
- (6) The Asahi Shimbun, March 16, 1987.
- (7) Ilse Koehn: *Mischling, Second Degree*, Bantam Books, 1978, p.6.
- (8) Eli Ginzberg, "Jews in the American Economy: the Dynamics of Opportunity," in Gladys Rosen (ed.): *Jewish Life in America—Historical Perspective*, KTAV, 1978, p.179.
- (9) G. E. Simpson & J. M. Yinger: *Racial and Cultural Minorities*, Harper & Brothers, 1953, p.25.
- (10) Dalsoo Kim, "Nikkan Toronkai Hiraite-mitara?" (How about Holding

- a Japanese-Korean Forum?), The Yomiuri Shimbun, February 4, 1982.
- (11) The Asahi Shimbun, March 21 1987.
- (12) Shijong Kim in his interview with Hiroshi Noma and Shotaro Yasuoka. See *Sabetsu (Discriminations)* Vol. II, The Asahi Shimbun, 1977, p.28.
- (13) Both published successively in late 1986 by the Tokuma Shoten, Tokyo.
- (14) Such as Kinji Yajima: *Yudaya Protokoru Cho Urayomi Jutsu (How to Read the Hidden Meaning of the Jewish Protocols)*, Seishun Shuppansha, Tokyo, 1986.
- (15) See Uriel Weinreich: *College Yiddish*, p.61.